



California
Department of
Child Support
Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CENTRALIZED CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENT MOVES INTO FOUR MORE COUNTIES

California Makes Bold Progress Toward Statewide Payment Processing

SACRAMENTO – California’s child support program continues its progress today with the expansion of centralized child support payment collection and processing to San Mateo, San Francisco, Alameda and Sacramento counties. With this transition, 76 percent of the state’s caseload now receives services from the Department of Child Support Services’ (DCSS) State Disbursement Unit (SDU), which is responsible for the collection and disbursement of all child support payments previously processed by local child support agencies.

“California’s child support program is entering a new era. We are well on our way toward meeting federal payment processing requirements that, when fully realized, will enhance the lives of countless children and families,” said DCSS Director Greta Wallace.

The four new county child support agencies transitioning to the centralized system represent approximately 9 percent of the state’s caseload, or approximately 171,000 cases. Californians with private child support orders who do not pay through wage withholding will not be affected by the centralized payment processing system.

In November 2005, local child support agencies began transitioning to the SDU. To date, all counties except Los Angeles have transitioned to the SDU. In its first five months of operation, the SDU has issued approximately \$229,700,000 in child support payments to families. Los Angeles County, which represents approximately 26 percent of the state’s child support caseload, will transition to the SDU next month.

The centralized system provides the following enhanced services to families receiving support and parents making support payments:

- Web and toll-free call center access to information.
- Direct deposit services for families receiving support payments, a new service in many counties.
- Instant access to dollars through electronic payment cards, similar to ATM or debit cards, which can be used at ATM machines as well as retail outlets beginning this summer.

Families affected by this change have been informed by DCSS and their local child support agencies. During the transition period, child support customers can expect their child support check and envelope to have a new look, payments to be sent from the SDU’s central location, payments to continue to be made to local child support agencies and local child support agencies to remain the primary point of contact for families and parents with questions about payments.

During the transition period, county child support agencies will forward child support payments daily to the SDU for processing. This forwarding process will delay child support payments for a few days, but is essential to ensuring accurate payment processing as counties convert to the statewide system.

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Those initial delays will be eliminated this summer when the SDU is fully operational. At that time, child support payments, formerly handled by local child support agencies, and all wage withholding payments will be sent directly to the SDU.

DCSS is responsible for ensuring that all functions necessary to establish, collect and distribute child support are effectively and efficiently implemented. In 2005, the state program collected \$2.3 billion and served more than two million children.

Child support program services are delivered through 52 local child support agencies. The following services are available at no cost to the public: locating a parent; establishing paternity; establishing, modifying and enforcing a court order for child support; and establishing, modifying and enforcing an order for health insurance coverage.

For more information, log on to <http://www.childsup.ca.gov/>.

BACKGROUND

Federal law requires states to implement a single statewide automated child support system, including a single location for processing all child support collections and payments, to provide statewide case management capabilities and to streamline and reduce the costs associated with the receipt and disbursement of child support collections. California's delay in meeting this requirement has resulted in having to pay significant federal penalties, which will end when the system qualifies for federal certification this September.

In 1999, state legislation required the Franchise Tax Board (FTB) to procure a performance-based contract for a single statewide automated system, now referred to as the California Child Support Automation System (CCSAS). The CCSAS project is overseen by DCSS and managed by FTB.

The CCSAS exemplifies the ability of state entities (DCSS and FTB) to work together to develop an automated system that will give state and local officials the necessary tools to better serve the public.

DCSS has also sought the active participation of local child support agencies in the CCSAS and SDU projects. Through the Child Support Directors Association and its various committees, local child support officials participate in every major aspect of the statewide system's development and implementation. This ongoing partnership is a critical component in the state's efforts to develop a system that will better serve California families and increase the state's ability to put child support dollars into the hands of children and families.

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*Supporting
California's
Children*

State Disbursement Unit

Fact Sheet

Federal law requires states to have a single statewide automated child support system, including a single location for processing all child support collections and payments. The delay in meeting this requirement has resulted in California paying more than \$970 million in penalties. Those federal penalties will stop when the new automated statewide system is in place.

To meet federal requirements, the California Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) is implementing a central payment processing site called the State Disbursement Unit (SDU). The SDU is responsible for collection and disbursement of all child support payments previously processed by the state's 52 local child support agencies, plus all wage assignment payments for private child support orders not currently processed by local child support agencies.

In November 2005, counties began transitioning to the SDU in a series of waves. During the first four waves, 47 local child support agencies in the following counties—Amador, Alpine, Calaveras, Kings, Modoc, Nevada, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tulare, Inyo/Mono, Lassen, Tehama, El Dorado, Santa Cruz/San Benito, Merced, Stanislaus, Kern, Fresno, Orange, San Luis Obispo, Imperial, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Riverside, San Bernardino, Colusa, Mariposa, Trinity, Plumas, Glenn, Del Norte, Tuolumne, Marin, Napa, Lake, Mendocino, Sutter, Yuba, Madera, Humboldt, Placer, Yolo, Butte, Shasta, Sonoma, Monterey, Solano, Contra Costa and San Diego—have transferred child support payment collection and processing to the SDU, representing approximately 65 percent of the state's child support program caseload.

Enhanced Services

Families receiving support, parents making support payments, and employers will receive enhanced services from the new system such as:

- Web and toll-free call center access to information.
- Immediate access to direct deposit services for families receiving support payments, if not already available.
- Beginning in summer 2006, families can get instant access to support dollars through electronic payment cards, similar to ATM or debit cards, which can be used at ATM machines as well as retail outlets.
- Parents can make payments using credit cards over a secure internet connection and set up electronic payment transfers from a checking or savings account.

Employers will be able to electronically transfer payments for wage withholding directly to the state and will have access to an Electronic Help Desk.

Implementation

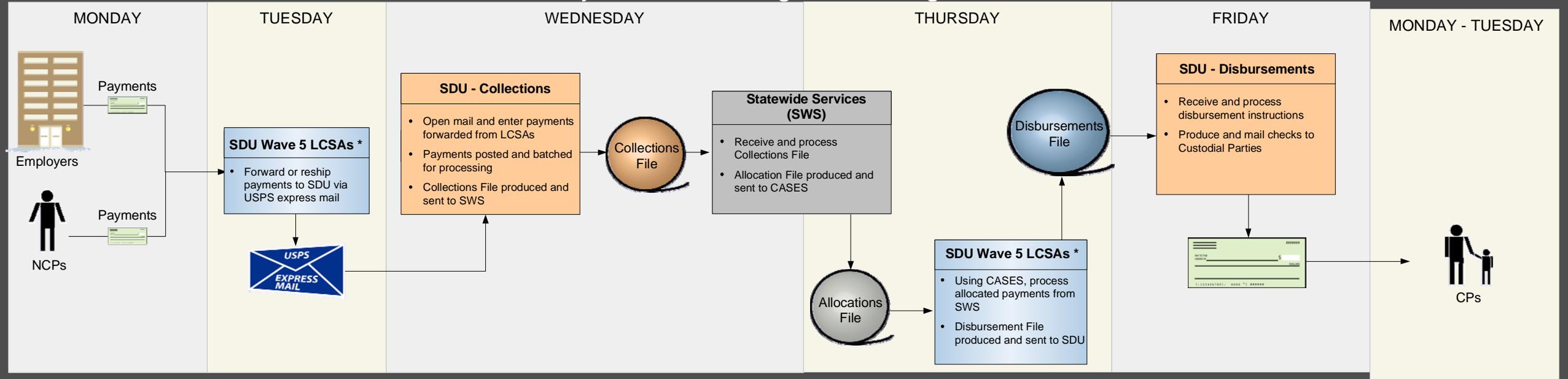
To minimize the impact on customers and ensure smooth local transitions, SDU implementation is being phased in statewide in a series of waves. During SDU transition, local child support agencies will forward child support payments daily via express mail services to the SDU for processing. This extra step during system transition will add a few days to when families usually receive their child support payments. Outreach in transitioning counties is being jointly provided by DCSS and local child support agencies.

- Wave 5 counties, representing approximately 9 percent of the state's caseload or approximately 171,000 cases, will transition in April 2006. Wave 5 counties are: San Mateo, San Francisco, Alameda, and Sacramento.
- Wave 6, Los Angeles County—representing approximately 26 percent of the state's caseload or approximately 475,000 cases—will transition in May 2006

In summer 2006 when the SDU is fully implemented and operational statewide, child support payments handled by local child support agencies and all wage withholding payments from private child support cases will be redirected to and handled by the SDU.

For more information, log on to www.childsup.ca.gov.

General Payment Processing Flow During SDU Transition



Alameda | San Mateo | San Francisco | Sacramento

General Payment Processing Timeline (EFT and Direct Deposit)

